

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 AID-05

IO-10 EB-07 OMB-01 /087 W

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O 221130Z DEC 75 ZFF1

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5824

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 6631

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA, US, TH, EAID

SUBJECT: LAO GOVERNMENT ASKS FOREIGN POWERS TO PERSUADE THAI
TO REOPEN BORDER AND TO FURNISH HUMANITARIAN AID

REF: VIENTIANE 6392 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NOUPHANH SITHPHASAY SUMMONED U.S., U.K., INDONESIAN

AND MALAYSIAN CHARGES AT 1600 LOCAL DECEMBER 22 TO

REQUEST THAT THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS TAKE APPRO-

PRIATE ACTION TO PERSUADE THAILAND TO CHANGE ITS

POLICY ON CLOSURE OF THE LAND BORDER WITH LAOS.

THAILAND HAD CLOSED THE BORDER UNILATERALLY AND MUST

OPEN IT UNILATERALLY. BROADER NEGOTIATIONS OF THE

TYPE REQUESTED BY THAILAND COULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL

RELATIONS WERE RESTORED TO THE STATUS THEY ENJOYED BEFORE

THE EVENTS OF NOVEMBER 17 AND 18 ON THE MEKONG. THEN

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THEY COULD DISCUSS WHAT TO TALK ABOUT. HE THOUGHT THE

U.S. GOVERNMENT COULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL IN VIEW OF ITS GOOD RELATIONS WITH THAILAND. THE LAO WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE HUMANITARIAN AID FROM ALL COUNTRIES, NOTABLY SUGAR, MILK AND WOMENS AND CHILDRENS CLOTHING. I TOLD HIM I WOULD FAITHFULLY REPORT HIS REMARKS. END SUMMARY.

1. SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS NOUPHANH SITHPHASAY SUMMONED U.S., U.K., INDONESIAN AND MALAYSIAN CHARGES TO FOREIGN MINISTRY AT 1600 HOURS DECEMBER 22 TO BRIEF THEM ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF LAO-THAI RELATIONS FOLLOWING THE FRONTIER INCIDENTS OF NOVEMBER 17-18 AFTER WHICH THE THAI HAD UNILATERALLY CLOSED THE FRONTIER, IMPOSING, IN EFFECT, A BLOCKADE. THIS THAI ACTION HAD NOT BEEN TAKEN IN ISOLATION. NEITHER HAD IT BEEN UNEXPECTED. IT WAS PART OF A PLAN WELL PREPARED IN ADVANCE. THE LAO PEOPLE HAD TRIED TO REESTABLISH PEACE, INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY. THE THAI HAD ORGANIZED PROVOCATIONS AND DISTURBANCES FOR THE WELL KNOWN BUT UNDECLARED PURPOSE OF TORPEDOING LAO INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY AND DESTROYING THE YOUNG LAO REPUBLIC AND THREATENING THE EXISTENCE OF THE NEW PEOPLE'S REGIME.

2. HE SAID THE BLOCKADE HAD CREATED A BAD ECONOMIC SITUATION IN VIENTIANE AND ITS ENVIRONS. MERCHANDISE FROM FRIENDLY COUNTRIES SENT TO HELP HEAL THE WOUNDS OF WAR WERE STOCKPILED IN THAILAND INCLUDING ESSENTIAL ITEMS SUCH AS GASOLINE, KEROSENE, MILK, SUGAR, CLOTH. THIS WAS DEPLORABLE. NOT ONLY THE LAO AUTHORITIES AND PEOPLE WERE SUFFERING BUT ALSO THEIR FRIENDS IN THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. THE PDRL CONTINUED BASICALLY THE SAME FOREIGN POLICY OF THE PGNU, A GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY.

THE THAI AUTHORITIES HAD MADE CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS. THEY SAID THEY WANTED TO REMAIN FRIENDS AND GOOD NEIGHBORS OF THE LAO PEOPLE BUT SOME THAI PERSONALITIES HAD SAID OTHER THINGS. THEY DEMANDED IN EXCHANGE FOR OPENING THE BORDER NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FRONTIER AND COLLECTIVE MEASURES FOR ITS CONTROL.

3. THE LAO CONSIDERED THIS ATTITUDE INSINCERE AND CONTRARY TO THE INTERESTS OF THE LAO PEOPLE. THE THAI
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GOVERNMENT HAD UNILATERALLY CLOSED THE BORDER; THEREFORE IT WAS UP TO THEM TO DECIDE WHETHER TO REOPEN IT OR TO KEEP IT CLOSED. FOR THEIR PART THE LAO CONSIDERED THE CLOSING AGAINST INTERNATIONAL LAW AND AGAINST THAILAND'S OBLIGATION TO FACILITATE THE PASSAGE OF GOODS DESTINED TO LAOS. BESIDES THAI WORKERS WERE UNEMPLOYED AND THAI PRODUCERS UNABLE TO SELL THEIR PRODUCTS IN VIENTIANE. THE LAO GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THE THAI ACTION

AN ARBITRARY, UNFOUNDED ONE.

4. THE LAO GOVERNMENT WISHED TO ASK THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE RESPECTIVE CHARGES TO THINK OF APPROPRIATE WAYS OF SUPPORTING THE LEGITIMATE LAO STRUGGLE TO DEFEND ITS INDEPENDENCE, NON-ALIGNMENT AND GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS. LAOS WAS A SMALL UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRY BUT WOULD NEVER AGREE TO BOW TO ANY COUNTRY THAT TRIED TO USE FORCE TO PUT PRESSURE ON IT. THE LAO GOVERNMENT THOUGHT THAT SOME ACTION BY THE CHARGES' REPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS WOULD HELP CAUSE THAILAND TO CHANGE ITS POLICY AND RETURN TO NORMAL RELATIONS WITH LAOS. AS FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS PROPOSED BY BANGKOK, THEY COULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

5. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION BY THE BRITISH CHARGE, NOUPHANH SAID THE LAO HAD NEVER CATEGORICALLY REFUSED NEGOTIATIONS BUT THAT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE FAVORABLE CONDITIONS, RELATIONS AS GOOD AS THEY WERE BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 17-18 INCIDENTS, FIRST. THEN BOTH SIDES COULD EXCHANGE VIEWS ABOUT WHAT TO DISCUSS. THE LAO FOREIGN MINISTER HAD THANKED THE THAI FOREIGN MINISTER FOR HIS MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS. IT WAS A GOOD MESSAGE AND IF THE SPIRIT MATCHED THE WORDS THAT WOULD BE GOOD TOO.

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6. NOUPHANH SAID THE LAO GOVERNMENT WAS APPEALING TO ALL FRIENDLY COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD, PARTICULARLY TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE CHARGES PRESENT, FOR HUMANITARIAN MATERIAL AID ON AN URGENT BASIS TO RELIEVE THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE PEOPLE CAUSED BY THE THAI BLOCKADE. ALL HUMANITARIAN AID WOULD BE WELCOMED FROM ANY COUNTRY ESPECIALLY ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS SUCH AS SUGAR, MILK, CLOTHING FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

7. HE SAID HE THOUGHT I COULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL IN VIEW OF THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THAILAND. I REPLIED ONLY THAT I WOULD FAITHFULLY REPORT HIS REMARKS.

8. COMMENT: THIS APPEAL, COMBINED WITH A SIMULTANEOUS PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE SAME SUBJECT, REPORTED SEPARATELY, AND A LONG ARTICLE IN SIENG PASASON INDICATE CLEARLY THAT THE CLOSURE OF THE FRONTIER IS HAVING A VERY SERIOUS EFFECT.
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ECT. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT THE LAO GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO DO WHAT IT CAN TO USE THE NON-COMMUNIST MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AS A CAT'S PAW IF POSSIBLE. AT THE SAME TIME IT DOES APPEAR THAT THEY ARE TRYING DESPITE THEIR TOUGH TALK TO GET THE WORD TO THE THAI THAT THEY WILL AT LEAST TALK ABOUT TALKING IF THE BORDER IS OPENED.
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